The Acton Free Press.

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The Acton Free Press

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THE ROBIN IN M TREE

Morning and evening up in my tree
There sings a robin a ditty to me,
'Tis "Cheerily! Cheerily! Cheerily!"
Ah what a prince of gay fellows is he!
With musical chirrup, ringing and clear,
He bids me be hopeful, casting out fear;
Says—"There is much in this world that is queer,
But still, let's be cheerful!" O, he's a dear!
Picking out worms for his love on the nest,
Preening the feathers of red on his breast,
When day lies in beauty down in the West
In the wind-rocked bough swinging to rest;
Before the sun rises out of the sea,
Shaking his throat-bells in sweet melody,
Greeting the morning from top o' my tree,
Brave Robin! Prince of good fellows is he!

Leaving Home

By F. E. C. Robbins

"NOW, Clara Belle, let's go easy and take our time," said Capt. Jacob Orr to the young girl who, with flushed face and heavily laden arms, hurried almost wildly down the garden walk. "The days and nights are just as long as ever they were. It's only eight miles to the depot and this animal of mine is considerable speedy. But we want to be sure that we've got all our cargo aboard before we cast off. Why don't you step back into the house and take a last look round while I'm turning the horse?"

"I'm all ready if you are, captain," answered the girl decisively. "It's over so kind of you to take me to the station," she said as they drove away.

"Oh, that's no great put 'out!" the captain assured her. "How long are you calculating to stay up to the city?"

"I can hardly tell. I expect to obtain employment and may remain some time. It is a beautiful morning, isn't it?"

"It is so," assented the captain heartily. "Not a cloud in the sky. Somehow, a clear morning like this, when things in the distance look so plain, is apt to set me thinking more than common of bygone days. For instance, there's the time I left the old home to go to sea. Mebbe, though, it's your starting off for the city that brings that up before me just now.

"Father and mother wouldn't give their consent, and arguing didn't seem to be of any use. So, one night, while mother was getting supper and father hadn't got home from his work, I did up a bundle and left a note and slipped out of the house and started to walk to Bayport, where I knew I could ship on a vessel that was to sail the next day. I went on pretty brisk for an hour or so, and then something seemed to be tugging me back. It seemed as if I must go and get one more glimpse of the old folks before I left for a year's voyage. Finally I turned round and trudged back home, and crept up and peeked into the kitchen window.

"Well, there wasn't much to see. They didn't appear to be taking on any. They were just setting there; but there was something about it that I couldn't stand, and I bolted right in on 'em. I told 'em I'd come back for their blessing, and I wasn't going to leave 'em without it, though I was just as crazy for the sea as ever. Well, they rejoiced over me as if I was the prodigal son. They said they could bear to have me go, but not in any such way as that. Then we talked it over kind of reasonable, and the upshot of it was that I shipped on another vessel about a week afterwards.

"I never blamed myself for going, for I had that hankering for the sea that you've heard tell of, and never would have been good for much in my younger days on the land. But when I finally did set out, father was taking me down to Bayport in the old chaise, and mother was standing in the doorway with a brave smile on her face, a-waving me off.

"Well, Clara Belle, the ship I didn't take was lost with all on board, while the one I did take made a prosperous voyage, and I got back home in about a year safe and sound. But mother wasn't there to meet me.

"I got three pictures of mother," the captain went on after a pause. "One of 'em is an old daguerreotype on the mantelpiece at home, and it isn't very good. The other two nobody but me can see. They are pretty plain to my eyes sometimes—this morning especially. There is mother setting in the kitchen with father, so kind and pitiful, the night I ran away; and again, there is mother standing on the doorstep, smiling the best she could and waving me good-by. I set great store by that picture, and I'm terrible glad I went back that night."

The old captain lapsed into silence, and Clara Belle did not interrupt as they rode along mile after mile. When he spoke again it was to change the subject entirely. "This old horse of mine never appears to be going as uncommon fast, but somehow he does eat up the ground amazingly.

"Let's see," he continued, drawing forth a battered silver watch. "I took the time just as we pulled out from your mother's, and it was six minutes to ten. Now she says seven minutes past ten; and, according to the guide-board, we've come five miles. That is doing pretty well, for a spavined horse. At that rate we'll get to the depot way ahead of time.

"We're coming to the lily pond in a minute, and what say to stopping and picking some? I noticed a boat hauled up on the bank the last time I drove by. Mebbe you'd like to send some lilies back to your mother to show that you had loving thoughts of her while you were on your way. I guess that such a token doesn't over come amiss to those that have been left at home. But if you are the least mite afraid of getting left, we had better not stop."

"Oh, that will be splendid!" said Clara Belle, with more animation than she had yet shown. "I'm not at all afraid of getting left."

The white-haired driver and his fair passenger hitched the horse by the roadside, and, like truant children, they paddled the clumsy boat over the pond, gathering their spoil of the white and gold flowers.

"Don't you believe we've pretty near used up our spare minutes?" suggested the captain at last.

"Why, it doesn't seem as if we had been here any time at all!" said Clara Belle.

Again the captain took out his big watch. "Well, sure enough, we have not been here any time at all," he exclaimed, "according to this old turnip of mine! It's seven minutes past ten, just as it was before. I guess she's stopped on me again."

"Why," Clara Belle cried, "that's the train whistling now! And here we are at least three miles from the station."

"I guess you've sized up the situation about right," the captain admitted. "It seems that we didn't have any time to spare, after all. I suppose if I had stopped to figure how many times five miles goes into thirteen minutes I might have known that we hadn't been going any such trotting-horse clip as that. Well, we can stop and get all the lilies we want now, and to-morrow we can make a fresh start."

When the returning travellers had nearly reached home, Clara Belle said with some hesitation, "I really don't want you to blame yourself, Capt. Orr, for letting me miss my train."

"Well, then, seeing it's you, I won't," returned the captain affably.

After a few minutes of silence, she began again: "I might as well confess; I know your watch was wrong all the time."

"Did you, now?" said the captain in a tone of interest. "And you were too polite to tell me! I'm a thousand times obliged to you, Clara Belle."

"But I wanted to get left," persisted the girl.

"Well, then, it worked out complete, for get left you did."

"Yes," she went on, "I didn't want to have to keep thinking of how I left mother this morning. You see, she thinks that seventeen going on eighteen is too young for me to begin a career in the city among strangers; but I was tired of staying at home and doing nothing, so I wouldn't give her any peace until she half consented. Then, this morning, when I was all ready, she began to cry and took back her consent; and I was angry and said things I shouldn't have said, and—I wonder if you noticed anything?"

"Well, it kind of came across me that mother wasn't on the doorstep waving good-by," the captain replied. "They were now making the turn of the road that brought them in sight of their journey's end.

"Why, there's the doctor's gig in front of mother's door!" cried Clara Belle, and the color left her cheeks. "Do drive on as fast as ever you can!"

When Capt. Orr reached home a little later, his wife met him with an anxious inquiry. "Dr. Carver drove by here a little while ago," she said. "Did you meet him, and find out who's sick?"

"Yes, I met him at Mrs. Ashley's. Oh, it's nothing dangerous!" he hastened to reassure her. "In fact, Mrs. Ashley was feeling pretty chipper when I left. The doctor was only there on an errand anyway. It seems that his brother-in-law who runs the mill over in Alna wants another office clerk right off, and the old doctor, who has always taken a good deal of interest in Clara Belle, thought he could get her the job. Clara Belle is pleased with the idea, and thankful enough that she came back with me."

"Came back with you? How did she happen to do that?"

"Well, said the captain, "It's oftentimes hard telling just why womenfolks change their minds; but, as near as I could guess, Clara Belle thought of something that she'd left behind."

SATIRA ANN

"Gabe, you're plum' simple about S'tiry Ann. As of good worsted, made up to home, wasn't good enough for her Sunday's best, that you must go and get her a silk mixed and a mantel maker to cut and baste it. In mine and your mother's days we didn't have such fine fixin's."

"But society makes more requirements now than it did then, Aunt Jemimy."

"It don't require paupers to be dressed in silk no more now than it did then, and it's not accordin' to fitness."

"You must not call Satiry a pauper to me, Aunt 'Mime. You know she had respectable bornin', and it's not her fault that she's poor and an orphan. When mother and me took her to raise—a little, slim, big-eyed thing of ten—I promised I'd be a—a parent to her, and I ain't no cause to regret all I've done for her, for she's been more than a daughter to—to mother. She's so kind and good that even the cats love her more than common."

"That's 'cause she gives them their catin'. It's a sinful waste, the plates of good broken vittels she sets down to them cats."

"Aunt 'Mime, I think we can feed two cats off our table scraps without its bein' imputed any great extravagance, 'specially as the mice would pretty nigh take us if we didn't keep 'em. As for Satiry, every brute critter on the place loves her."

"An' some that ain't brute critters too, I'm guessin'."

Gabriel colored and gave his aunt a sidelong glance. She saw, but, pretending not to, went on:

"How's she an' Luke Shull gettin' on? You've tricked her out so fine now I reckon he'll be poppin' the question pretty soon, for fear some of the other fellows gets ahead of him; for it can't be gainsaid that S'tiry Ann has plenty of admirers, but for my part I never could see any beauty in a complexion of chalk and cheese. Shouldn't wonder if she'd make a heap of doctor's expense for the man that marries her."

"Satiry has perfect health, aunt."

"No sign she'll always have; but if Luke wants to risk it I reckon he's able, an' it's none of our concern."

Gabriel flushed again, and then turned pale to the tips of his fingers, all the blood in his being seeming to urge in one great wave about his heart.

"I must be going,' said he, rising. 'Must I tell mother you'll be over tomorrow? She wanted special for you to come."

"Yes; I reckon."

"It's wonderful how Gabe sticks up for S'tiry Ann," said the aunt, as she looked after the retreating form of her nephew, "an' talin' for nothin' neither or I miss my reckonin'. I wish Luke would marry her offhand an' get her out of the way, for I don't want my children knocked out of the prospect of inheritin' the best farm in the country by that little white-faced thing. Men's never too old to make fools of themselves, an' Gabe's only thirty."

Yes, only thirty; that was all, but he had been called "Old Gabe" so long that the idea of senility had long since fettered to him. He had not resented the appellation when, in his teens, it was first applied to him, but now, as he pursued his way along the meadow path, it impressed him with a keen sense of injustice.

"I wonder if Satiry cares anything out of the common for Luke Shull," he went on thinking. "I never thought of them as anything but friends till Aunt 'Mime set me on it to-day. It's plain she doesn't think of there being anything in me for a young girl to fancy. I wonder if she really has a suspicion of the state of my feelin's, and what she'd think if she had. Think me a fool, I reckon; which I s'pose I am. Well, if it's to be Luke, I'll not stand in the way, and most of all, I'll never let Satira guess. Ehh's thro-

OUTGROW YOUR PLACE

When you accept a new position, make it your first aim to outgrow it. For, as some one has wisely said, if you are not too large for your place, you are too small for it. Learn more about your business than is necessitated by the position you fill. Master details until you are indispensable. It will be noticed that a person who is taken for a higher place is always the one who cannot well be spared from his present post.

than life to me, and it'll be more than death to give her up and make no sign, but old Gabe can do it."

Wise Aunt 'Mime! She had counted not amiss on the effect her words would have on Gabe. Once make him think that Satira's happiness depended on his silence, and he could die and make no sign. "For if she loves Luke, it would pain her kind little heart to know that I care," thought he; but a great surge of pain swept his being as he thought how in the plenitude of his affection he had lavished on his heart's idol the personal adornments he so rejoiced to bestow, only the sooner to lose her because of the added attractions they gave her in the eyes of a younger and handsomer rival; but, having made his renunciation, it was the nature of the man that it be whole-souled, and thenceforth he did what he could to make, as he supposed, the waters of true love run smooth.

It soon became evident to him that Luke had a "more than common fancy" for Satira, and he did not stop to question for a moment that she returned the sentiment, so if he often hurt her by his own coldness and change of demeanor, he was unconscious of it, and Aunt Jemima failed not to help along the illusion that it was, as she expressed it, "a sure case between the young folks."

"Why do you never get me to help you with your niggers any more?" Satira ventured timidly, one evening, when Gabriel was struggling with several pages of accounts.

"I s'posed you wouldn't care to—now."

"Why now!" with an accent and a searching glance, but he avoided meeting her eyes. Dared he let her all beside him, as in the olden time—some three months in reality, but years as reckoned by what he felt and suffered—and risk the accidental touch of her little fingers, or her fluffy hair, perchance, against his cheek, as they bent over the ledger together.

"This once," love pleaded, ere he answered: "If you're sure you don't mind, I'd be proud to have you."

"If he's sure I don't mind. Why will he treat all my little kindnesses so cool, and as if he thought I didn't mean them? And he's done so much for me. Seems as if all at once he's got set against me," Satira was thinking, as she went on adding, the pain in her tender little heart growing heavier and heavier as the slow minutes ticked away, for it was in vain that Gabriel tried to seem his own natural self, and in order to avoid "making a fool of himself," he assumed a coldness of demeanor that was chilling to her, so that it was with the utmost effort that she kept a steady voice as she went on.

At last the effort became too much for her. "Nine and nine are eighteen and seven are twenty-five, with two to carry," she faltered, and just then a big tear splashed down on the page and she could not see what came next.

Gabriel turned and took her face between his two hands, and for the first time in weeks looked squarely in her eyes, but the long lashes dropped, the blood mounted to her face and two more tears rolled slowly down her cheeks.

"What is it, Satira? Is it anything about Luke? Maybe old Gabe can make it right for you, if it's only a lover's quarrel."

"Lover's nonsense! Rather Luke! I wish I never had seen him."

"Why, aren't you engaged to him, Satiry?"

"No; I'm not."

"But you love him, don't you?"

"No; I never!"

"Do you love anyone, Satiry?"

The flushed face dropped lower, but no answer came. He raised her face again.

"Satiry, look at me."

For an instant only, the gray eyes unveiled themselves, but Gabriel saw that in their depths which set his nerves thrilling.

"Satiry, can it be possible that you love me?"

"Would it be so very wonderful if I did?"

"It would be a glimpse of the Delectable mountain, after wallopin' for ages in the Slough of Despond."

"There's some that deserve to stand plump on top of the Delectable Mountain, for very goodness," answered Satira.

"Satiry," there was a ring of pain in his voice, "do you love me for what I've done for you?"

"I love you because—just because I love you."

"And you do not think me old and ugly?"

"Old and ugly!"

"That was all she said, but there was a look in her eyes, a ring in her voice that rattled him.

"Oh, Satiry!" as his arms encircled her, "an hour ago I thought I was the most miserable of men; now I know I'm the happiest."

So Aunt Mime's hopes lost their prospect of "inheriting the finest farm in the county" after all.—Good Housekeeping.

ENORMOUS INDUSTRIES ARE POSSIBLE

It is safe to say that the power plants at Niagara represent an investment of nearly $100,000,000, and these have called into being manufactories of one kind and another to the value of $600,000,000. It can be seen what enormous industries would be called into being if 2,000,000 horsepower were made available. It is estimated that this amount of power would represent a saving of 12,000,000 tons of coal, or a production of energy based on the present price of fuel, of over $12,000,000.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

From the Issue of the Free Press of Thursday, June 16, 1898

Wheat is down to 85 cents again.

The painters have much improved the appearance of the front of Hynds' jewellery store on Mill Street.

The travelling bag department of Messrs. W. H. Storey & Son is crowded with orders.

Mr. Samuel Laird has purchased the dwelling at the G. T. R. pumping house and will remove it to a vacant lot recently purchased on Young Street, opposite the residence of Archibald Campbell, Esq. The foundation is being built this week.

The willows planted by the Adamses and the late William Steel on Willow Street, gave that thoroughfare its name. Only one of the original trees now remains. It marks the corner of the Steel property. Its companion fell with a crash yesterday morning, one side having decayed to the heart.

A fire broke out in the new hair house at the Acton Tanning Co. on Monday evening. Owing to the very prompt assistance of the firemen, who had two streams playing on the flames in a few minutes, the fire was extinguished in about half an hour. The loss is about $500. On Tuesday Reeve Pearson received from the Acton Tanning Company a cheque for $25 in recognition of the splendid services rendered by the Fire Brigade in subduing the flames at the tannery fire the night before.

MARRIED

ALEXANDER-BURROWS—At St. Alban's Rectory, on Monday evening, June 13, by Rev. J. K. Godden, M. A., Robert Alexander, of Agnes Street, to Miss Hannah Burrows.

OPPORTUNITIES AND JEAN

"Whenever," Agatha declared, "I see that advertisement in the street-car signs that says, 'Opportunities are equal,' I get so mad that I want to fight!! They aren't equal, and never will be as long as the world lasts. Why do people want to lie like that?"

"They certainly are not equal," Jean agreed. "Some people—like me—have so many more than others."

Agatha caught her breath. "O Jean, what a brute you must think me!" she cried. "I'm ashamed of myself clear through—you lying here all day with all that muck shut up in your fingers. Only—that just proves my contention; you're the biggest illustration of it I know—you lying here, and Elsie Sharp, who never could learn to play in a thousand years—really play, with anything except her fingers, I mean—going to the conservatory—"

"Mith Jean! Mith Jean—"

The voice was full of excitement and importance—Tommy Hafoy's voice by every token. A moment later Tommy himself appeared in the doorway, panting and breathless.

"Mith Jean, Pearl's broke a jar of huckleberry all over herthelf, and ma thays what will take it out? It's a thight, Mith Jean. It runned down all her dreth, like tho'd thpilled ink!"

"Dear me, Tommy, you'll have to build a fence about Pearl, won't you? But tell your mother not to worry—just to pour boiling water over it. Wait a minute; I'll write it for you."

She picked up a pad and pencil from the table; also a couple of pink peppermints.

"There you are, Mr. Postman, and there's your postage stamp," she told him. "Sure you won't have it?"

"Thure, I won't," said Tommy in tones that were somewhat blurred by the peppermint in his mouth.

"Did you—" Agatha began, but the telephone broke in. It was close beside Jean's hand, and she was answering at once.

"Oh, that's too bad! But don't worry, Rose dear; try a hot iron over blotting paper. If that doesn't work I'll tell you something else. But I think it will. It won't hurt the fabric in the least."

As she hung up the telephone, Agatha looked at her whimsically.

"Do you run an emergency station, Jean?"

"I am beginning to believe that I do," Jean responded. "Promise not to tell? Do you see that card index there? It has remedies for half the accidents under the sun. I get people to tell me valuable ones, or try those I already know. It began with Tommy one morning when Pearl upset a bowl of soup. Pearl can furnish an accident a day, easily; in fact, she may be able to have started me on my career. It's such fun! You don't know how I'm getting acquainted down on Finney Street. The little club I used to have has extended all over the neighborhood."

"There are people," Agatha declared "who would find opportunities in the Sahara."

"Why, of course!" Jean agreed, laughing.

WASTE PAPER FOR FUEL

Waste paper is being used as fuel by some women who devise every way possible to cut down their coal bills. They take old newspapers, wrapping paper, cardboard, or any other old waste paper, and tear it up into small pieces, and place in a watertight receptacle. Boiling water is then poured over it, and it is left until the mass becomes soft, usually taking about twelve hours. This mass is then made into little balls about four inches in diameter, which are set out into the sun to dry, or may be dried in an oven. When thoroughly dry, these balls are ready for use. They catch fire quickly and burn slowly, and have been found a very satisfactory substitute for coal.

HALF-PAST EIGHT

"Half-past eight is a horrid time!
When I'm rooted in my chair,
And I see my breakfast there,
Then that little clock will chime!
He looks father o'er his plate,
Hurry, Tom! or you'll be late!
It's half-past eight!

After school, though, I do things,
Fly my kite or play at ball—
Till I hear our Hannah call,
When the supper bell she rings.
Then the fire lit in the grate,
And I read there while I wait
For half-past eight.

Seems to me I haven't read
Half a page when, what a bother
Father looks and says to mother,
"It's time for Tom to go to bed."
So I have to yield to fate;
If there's any time I hate,
It is half-past eight!"

—Selected.

WHEN THE LONG LANE TURNED

Almost forty years ago, when I was a lad of fourteen, a crotchety old farmer, named Josiah Stebbins, ordered me and two other boys out of his woods, where we were gathering chestnuts," said a gentleman recently, in reminiscent conversation with a friend. "Of course, Mr. Stebbins was within his rights, but there were bushels of the nuts that he could never use, and his rough, abusive language angered us.

"'We'll get even with you for this!' Lyman Crosier shouted back defiantly, and he added in a lower tone, 'It's a long lane that don't turn somewhere.'

"On the way home we discussed ways and means of 'getting even' with Josiah Stebbins, but none of our boyish projects were practicable. The other boys soon forgot the whole matter; but as for me, the adage about the 'long lane' was scarcely out of my mind for a day, and I repeated it to myself every time I saw Mr. Stebbins. It did not occur to me that I was nursing a revengeful spirit; on the contrary, I felt rather proud of standing up for my own rights.

"One October afternoon the next year, as I was crossing a corner of Ira Judson's pasture, I saw eleven lambs jump over a low place in the fence into Mr. Stebbins' field. Something had startled them, for they raced at full speed the length of the back meadow and disappeared over the crest of a rocky ridge beyond.

"When I reached the top of the ridge the lambs were nowhere in sight. There was a small, unused hay barn in the next field, and here I found the frightened animals huddled, the sagging door closed behind them. Plainly the lambs had jostled against the door when they crowded in, setting it a-swing, and the high wind had done the rest. To my mind, the accident was full of possibilities. The heavy door was not likely to be pushed open, and when the animals were missed it would be easy to direct the search in the right direction. Then I should find the turning of the long lane.

"I decided to take Lyman Crosier into my confidence, and actually set off for the Crosier farmhouse; but halfway there I halted. Could I state the circumstances in a way to reflect creditably on the part I was playing? I did not intend to disclose all the facts, but only to tell Lyman that I had found the lambs shut up in Josiah Stebbins' hay barn. I had always hated lying and deceit, and it shocked me to realize how near I had come to telling my friend a falsehood. No, I would keep my secret.

"Could I? I stopped short, as if a Real Questioner blocked my path, demanding an instant answer. Sometimes I think He did. God knew all the details that I had hesitated to relate to a schoolmate, and what must He think of me? Was the thought of petty revenge I had cherished any more pleasing to Him than the open deceit I had refrained from practicing? And could I carry my project through without acting a lie?

"I opened the door of the hay barn and let the lambs out before I returned home, and I told Ira Judson that they were in Mr. Stebbins' field. No one else knew of the matter. That was the turning point of my whole life, for out there in the silence of the autumn fields I learned to measure life and conduct by God's standard."

MOTORISTS HAVE RIGHT OF WAY

The Municipal World, gives particulars of a case of interest to owners of automobiles. It says a horse-drawn vehicle must turn to the right of a beaten path or roadway and permit a motor car coming from behind to pass. Failure to do so makes the driver of the former vehicle guilty of negligence in the opinion of a jury composed largely of farmers at Woodstock. This verdict was reached after a trial lasting three days. Miss Florence Reid filed suit again Lant Stevens, demanding $5,000 damages for personal injuries received in a runaway, caused, as she averred, when Stevens drove his car into her buggy when she ignored the repeated signals to turn out and give part of the road. As Stevens drove past the buggy the car collided with the wheels of the former vehicle, the crash frightening the horse, which ran away, throwing the occupants of the buggy out. Mrs. Reid received injuries which she claims are permanent. After a hard fought trial the jury decided in favor of the defendant, claiming that the plaintiff was negligent in not surrendering one-half of the road. The decision establishes an important precedent, and one that will be of interest to every driver whether of a motor car or a horse drawn vehicle.

NOBLE SAYINGS

The fool pursues the pleasures of life, and finds himself deceived; the wise man avoids its evils.—Schopenhauer.

Sacred thoughts, in holy bosoms stored,
Make people noble, and the place adored.
—Beaumont and Fletcher.

A man can do what he will his duty; and when he says "I cannot," it is that he will not.—Fichte.

Put love into the world, and heaven with all its beatitudes and glories becomes a reality. Love is everything; it is the key of life, and its influences are those that move the world.—R. W. Trine.

Oh, the glad sounds of the joyous earth!
The murmurs that live in the mountain pines,
The sighing of reeds as the day declines.—Felicia Hemans.

A soul without reflection, like a pile
Without inhabitant, to ruin runs.
—Young.

It is a happy world after all. The air, the earth, the water teem with delighted existence. In a spring noon or a summer evening, on whichever side I turn my eyes, myriads of happy beings crown upon my view.—Paley.

To err is human; to admitop is divine.

Don't have too little confidence in yourself or too much in others.